



NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION

Strategic & Development Review 2015 to 2017

Summary

2013 & 2014 have seen considerable investment in resources to re-energise and refocus the NRA and Bisley camp after a decade or more of decline and neglect. These efforts are beginning to bear fruit but we need to move quickly to deliver demonstrable improvements to the services provided by the NRA and facilities offered at Bisley.

The future for the NRA depends on it being the authoritative voice for full bore shooting in particular and all shooting in general. Shooting has a great story to sell to the unconvinced public and improving our reputation will need careful, consistent and professional promotion of the sporting nature of shooting.

The fantastic facilities at Bisley camp are our crown jewels that allow us to “do” as well as “say” and are the prime revenue source for the organisation. Shooting is what Bisley does best and busy ranges offering excellent facilities to growing numbers of shooters will be the focus of our investments.

Indeed, demand for range space at Bisley has led us to consider how available range space can be increased through more effective booking coordination and new range developments where possible. There is also no lack of demand for full bore shooting around the UK and there are great opportunities for the NRA to lead this growth in participation. 700,000 people already shoot in the UK but a tiny fraction have ever visited Bisley let alone shot on our fabulous ranges.

The focus of the next three years will be to continue improving the infrastructure and resources to deliver an organisation with excellent, welcoming and good value facilities that will serve current and future generations of shooters. These improvements need cash and we need to improve our efficiency, maximise our income streams and recognise the unique value of what the NRA offers.

Overriding Principles

- Promote and protect target shooting sports for the benefit of all NRA members
- Develop Bisley as a first class shooting venue for a full range of target shooting activities
- Promote and support Full Bore shooting across the UK
- Deliver consistently good value and invest cash surpluses for the benefit of current and future generations of shooters (as opposed to providing the cheapest possible shooting for the current membership)



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Key Objectives 2015 to 2017

Maintain a residual cash balance of £200k after minimum annual maintenance spend at Bisley of £500k per annum and invest surplus cash, when earned, in capital / improvement projects.

- Improve access to regional ranges
- Increase Bisley range utilisation
- Improve the infrastructure of Bisley camp
- Improve services to members and increase membership
- Make Bisley more welcoming to new and prospective shooters
- Increase participation in competitions
- Improve communication with members and affiliated clubs

Maintain a residual cash balance of £200k after minimum annual maintenance spend of £500k and invest surplus cash, when earned, in capital / improvement projects.

The forecast outturn for the financial year ended December 2014 shows a net surplus of £423k after charging £424k in maintenance / improvements. The agreed budget for the 2015 financial year shows revenues increasing to £5.8m and net surplus of £320k after charging £509k in maintenance / improvements. Budget revenues and expenditure have been calculated to accommodate targets set out in this review.

We plan to retain a minimum cash reserve of £200k and invest surpluses on capital / development projects with commitments to expenditure being made when we have (1) funds in the bank and (2) confidence in our forecast to the end of each financial year. 2014 is forecast to see a minimum month-end cash balance of £200k, with £200k forecast for the year end.

Our cash reserves link closely to net current assets, which are a measure of the NRA's financial flexibility and resilience in the case of adverse events: month-end figures for this are forecast to range between £539k and £200k in 2014.

In common with 2014, we will commit to limiting price increases for member services to no more than RPI for 2015 and 2016. The increase for 2015 for membership fees, range hire, annual rents etc. has therefore been agreed by Council at 2.0%.

The NRA is therefore committing to no real-terms price increase for services to members for the three years across 2014 - 2016 inclusive.



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Improve access to regional ranges

Perhaps the greatest threat to full bore shooting lies in the steady reduction in access for civilian shooting on MoD ranges. It is obvious that increasing demands for range time from Forces returning from abroad and the growing number of reserves risks squeezing out our members.

Cost cutting is being blamed with some ranges being shut at weekends; we are exploring the need / possibility of training up range wardens to allow civilian shooting.

During 2015 to 2017 we should consider facilitating / funding a number of regional ranges, probably in partnership with local affiliated clubs. In 2015 we will be recruiting a Regional Ranges Manager, based away from Bisley; and establish a Regional Ranges Committee to investigate current UK range facilities and develop a regional ranges strategy. Longer term we need to create an effective network of staff, volunteers and agents to promote full bore shooting and maximise opportunities for shooting away from Bisley.

2015 Target Recruit Regional Ranges Manager; establish Regional Ranges Committee (to provide interim report by September 2015)

Increasing Bisley range utilisation

Good range utilisation is the key indicator of success at Bisley; busy ranges promote membership, camp rents, accommodation income and ammunition sales.

The nature of shooting at Bisley is changing; this is a reflection of changes in the relative support for our various disciplines as indicated in the table below. Whilst some disciplines such as TR are maintaining a steady number of participants, their percentage share of the overall membership has declined slightly owing to an increasing total number of NRA members.

Primary Discipline	% of Membership 2008	% of Membership 2012	% of Membership 2014
Target Rifle	54	48.5	46.3
Sporting Rifle	11.5	14	13.6
F Class	4.5	7	7.4
Gallery Rifle & Pistol	9	9.5	8.7
Match Rifle	3	3	2.8
Service Rifle	3.5	4	4.6
Practical Rifle	3.5	3.5	3.6
Muzzle Loading	5	4.5	3.5
Classic Rifle & Pistol	5	4	3.9
300 metre	1	1	4.4
Target Shotgun	0	1	1.2



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Strategically this poses a significant question – do we accept these changes or attempt to encourage participation in certain disciplines? On balance it seems sensible to concentrate our efforts and resources to improving shooting facilities and provide individual disciplines with resources and promotional support.

Range developments need to be prioritised to serving the demands from Bisley shooters for the next 5 to 10 years; our plans for future investments for range development include electronic targets (Century, Stickledown and Cheylesmore); increasing the number of targets available on Short Siberia range with extended covered firing points and improved car parking; creating new ranges behind Melville; and refurbishing Cheylesmore range.

In time our main ranges should provide electronic targets; covered firing points serving targets at variable distances; easily accessible car parking; with adjacent range warden offices with modern facilities. Testing the desirability and practicality of the key elements (electronic targets and covered firing points) throughout 2015 will guide us to deciding upon the programme for a wider roll out.

Balancing the demands for our ranges from members and corporate users will be an increasing challenge. Major corporate users such as the CNC are providing vital income that is funding much of the range improvement programme. Recent ranges improvements (new target turners, all weather range floors, upgraded ballistic range partitions etc.) have benefitted both members and corporate users.

Improving IT and systems that control range bookings is essential; our aspiration must be to allow members to book and pay for targets online and have certainty that their booking will be honoured. Electronic targets are critical in expanding range capacities.

Our clay shooting operations have yet to be properly addressed; the basic facilities are terrific but the quality of the service delivery can be improved.

2015 Target

Sample electronic targets on Century, Stickledown and Cheylesmore ranges; increased number of available 100 yard targets on Short Siberia; increase range side car parks on Century and Short Siberia; conclude plans for new ranges behind Melville.



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Improve the infrastructure of Bisley Camp

The camp infrastructure needs consistent and progressive investment to deliver noticeable and beneficial improvements.

Service infrastructure has been an early priority as we need to expand and enlarge the provision of electric, water, foul drainage, gas and internet connections.

In 2014 we started the long project of upgrading site roads; those serving the major ranges were identified as a priority. This work needs to be accelerated as pot holes and shabby surfaces are unattractive, diminish the appearance of the camp, and absorb too many resources on temporary repairs.

Accommodation is an important resource at Bisley and 2014 saw significant investment in bedroom accommodation and the first development of serviced caravan pitches. However far too much of our stock remains of barely acceptable standard, especially given that one aim of the accommodation is to attract in shooters who do not currently use Bisley. The range of available accommodation (whether NRA-owned or privately held) needs to be expanded, allowing for choices to match the variety of tastes likely among the shooters of the future as well as of the present.

A site-wide plan needs to be developed to assist the scheduling and planning of future developments and improvements; furthermore we need to carefully manage the landscaping to protect the unique character and atmosphere on camp.

For 2015 signage, roads, parking and decorative works to NRA building stock will be prioritised.

2015 Target £100k minimum spend on road improvement; conclude preparations for the second phase of serviced caravan sites; develop camp landscaping scheme.

Improve service to members and increase membership

The perceived value of membership needs to be improved. This work will be led by a reconfigured membership department and will concentrate upon the steps necessary to (a) increase shooting membership (b) increase the number of affiliated clubs and (c) improve the cover provided by NRA insurance policies.

We are experiencing an increasing number of requests for advice on licensing matters and will be assigning more senior staff resources to serve this important work.



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The training programme is being expanded and improved to cope with growing demands; the instructor team will be based in the new Training Centre at Wimbledon House.

Open Days in previous years have proved popular but demanding of considerable resources; they are however ineffective at promoting membership. Early trials of “guest days” have proved successful and we are planning to extend these throughout 2015 to offer a taste of full bore shooting.

Current growth in membership and range utilisation are despite virtually no expenditure on marketing and promotion. We need to carefully assess our efforts to grow the membership in line with the capacity of ranges, particularly at weekends.

The challenges facing younger shooters are likely to increase, particularly for those leaving University burdened by debt. We need to expand the financial support given to our younger shooters through more generous subsidies and greater activity from schemes such as the Young Shooters’ Fund.

2015 Target 3% increase in membership; 10% increase in participation in training & coaching programmes; new senior management role for legislation / safety / policy / technical issues; host regular Guest Days; deliver material improvement to insurance policies for individual members and affiliated clubs; increase young shooter subsidies by 33%; increase the Young Shooters’ Fund capital by £25k.

Make Bisley more welcoming to new and prospective shooters

Bisley to the new visitor appears unfriendly and bewildering. The NRA needs to take ownership of the camp through improved signage and a readily accessible and welcoming Visitor Centre.

The new Visitor Centre based at the Exhibition Hut will provide weekend reception for Bisley visitors, a pleasant and good quality cafeteria, the base for our accommodation letting business and out-of-hours night porters.

The range office and armoury are being remodelled to improve the service offered to visiting shooters.

2015 Target Establishment of Visitor Centre Spring 2015; new primary signage installed by Spring 2015; remodel range office and armoury.



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Increase participation in competitions

2014 saw a reversal in the long term decline of the numbers of entries to most NRA competitions. I suspect this is due to the development of recent initiatives including “Discipline Days” as well as improving facilities at Bisley and economic outlook.

Improving the involvement of Bisley Clubs is important as they should be nurturing and developing new talent. Too many clubs appear committed to only servicing traditional shooting disciplines; with TR now representing the primary discipline of around 46% of the membership, there are good arguments that the majority of members (and shooters on the Bisley ranges) do not find the welcoming club environment that is a key component of many members’ enjoyment of the sport. Correspondingly, Bisley Clubs are missing out on memberships and a vibrant life in their clubhouses over more of the year than at present.

The current policy where NRA competitions aim for a 5% surplus of income over expenditure after charging range hire at the standard rate (but excluding payroll costs and central overheads) has proved largely successful and encouraged more efficient range utilisation.

We need to encourage younger shooters and be mindful of the increasing financial burden borne by those leaving full time education. Concessions on competition fees for younger shooters should be increased.

2015 Target Increase number of entries in NRA competitions by 3%. Competitions to deliver 5% surplus. 40% discount on entry fees for U25’s.

Improve communication with members and affiliated clubs

2014 has seen a rapid increase in the amount of communications with the membership. We support the quarterly journal, monthly e-newsletter, and weekly posts to Facebook and Twitter. The new membership database will allow better targeting of our communications; and we need to improve the timeliness of our work through better planning.

Too much of our communication concentrates on what we have done; we need to be more proactive in informing members of current issues, shooting opportunities, and technical / legislative updates.

2015 Target New website; further promotion of the NRA and Bisley camp.

Andrew Mercer

December 2014